FACTSHEET

NTP INTERAGENCY CENTER FOR THE EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVE TOXICOLOGICAL METHODS

Year 2001

National Toxicology Program

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headquartered at the

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SCIENCES

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

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The National Toxicology Program Interagency Center for the Evaluation of Alternative Toxicological Methods (Center) was established in 1998 to facilitate scientific review and validation of novel toxicological methods that predict human health risks while reducing, refining, and/or replacing animal tests. The Center works closely with the Interagency Coordinating Committee on the Validation of Alternative Methods (ICCVAM) that was originally established in 1997 by the Director of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) to implement NIEHS directives in Public Law 103-43. P.L. 103-43 directed NIEHS to develop and validate new test methods, and to establish criteria and processes for the validation and regulatory acceptance of toxicological testing methods. ICCVAM was established as a permanent committee in December 2000 with the enactment of P. L. 106-545, the ICCVAM Authorization Act of 2000. The Committee is composed of representatives from 15 Federal regulatory and research agencies that generate, use, or provide information from toxicity test methods for risk assessment purposes. ICCVAM coordinates cross-agency issues relating to development, validation, acceptance, and national/international harmonization of toxicological test methods.

The ICCVAM Test Method Evaluation Process

When adequate information is available for a new test method, independent **peer review panels**, composed of expert scientists from industry, academia, and government, including the international community, are convened and charged with developing a scientific consensus on the validation status of the proposed test method, including its usefulness and limitations for generating information for specific human health and/or ecological risk assessment purposes. **Workshops and expert panel meetings** are also convened to assess appropriate research, development, and validation efforts needed for methods that have not been fully evaluated. In assessing the validation status of a method, panels consider available information for a specific test method and evaluate the extent to which the ICCVAM validation and acceptance criteria have been addressed. The deliberations of the panels are conducted in public session and opportunity for public comment is provided before and during meetings. Published reports of panel evaluations and ICCVAM recommendations regarding scientific validity and potential acceptability of test methods are forwarded to agencies for their consideration. Each Federal agency then determines the regulatory acceptability of a method according to its statutory mandates.

Test Method Evaluations

NICEATM and ICCVAM have completed comprehensive evaluations on four test methods. The Murine Local Lymph Node Assay (LLNA), a method for assessing the allergic contact dermatitis of chemicals, was completed in 1998. EPA, FDA, and OSHA have announced their acceptance of this assay, which can now be used as a substitute for traditional guinea pig tests. The review of Corrositex^{R}, an in vitro method for assessing the dermal corrosivity potential of chemicals, was completed in 1999 and has now been accepted by regulatory agencies. The Center has completed an expert panel evaluation of the Frog Embryo Teratogenesis Assay in *Xenopus* (FETAX) and a final report will be available in 2001. Also, a peer review panel was convened to evaluate the validation status of a revised Up-and-Down Procedure for acute oral toxicity and a final report will be available in 2001.

Visit the NTP Home Page at http://ntp-server.niehs.nih.gov

Workshops

NICEATM and ICCVAM organize workshops for the purpose of developing research, development, and validation recommendations for test methods in the development phases. An ICCVAM/NTP International Workshop on In Vitro Methods for Assessing Acute Systemic Toxicity was held in October 2000 to evaluate the current validation status of in vitro methods for assessing acute toxicity. The workshop report and ICCVAM recommendations will be available for public distribution in 2001.

Future Test Method Evaluations

The NTP Center and ICCVAM are preparing comprehensive background review documents on in vitro screening methods to identify chemicals with potential endocrine disrupting effects. These documents will be used as the basis for an independent scientific peer review evaluation of the methods currently anticipated for early 2002. Two in vitro methods proposed to replace the in vivo Draize corneal irritation test in certain situations have been submitted to the Center for consideration. Two in vitro skin corrosivity test methods and an in vitro phototoxicity assay validated by the European Centre for the Validation of Alternative Methods (ECVAM) and recently approved by the European Commission are also under consideration.

Oversight and External Advice

The Department of Health and Human Services has established an NTP Federal Advisory Committee on Alternative Toxicological Methods to provide advice on the activities and priorities of the Center and ICCVAM, and to recommend ways to foster partnership activities and productive interactions among all stakeholders. The Advisory Committee is composed of knowledgeable scientists from academia, industry, public interest/animal welfare organizations, and other agencies. The Committee typically meets twice yearly; summary minutes are available on the Center's web site (http://iccvam.niehs.nih.gov).

Partnerships

Opportunities for organizations and agencies to partner with the Center to support the development, validation, and review of new alternative testing methods are available. Interested individuals should contact Dr. William S. Stokes, the Center Director, for further information (see below).

Additional Information

Additional information can be found at the Center web site: http://iccvam.niehs.nih.gov and in the publication: *Validation and Regulatory Acceptance of Toxicological Test Methods, a Report of the ad hoc Interagency Coordinating Committee on the Validation of Alternative Methods* (NIH Publication No. 97-3981, or you may contact the Center at telephone 919-541-2384, or by email at iccvam@niehs.nih.gov. Specific questions about the Center can be directed to:

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ICCVAM Agencies and Programs

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry
Consumer Product Safety Commission
Department of Agriculture
Department of Defense
Department of Energy
Department of Interior
Department of Transportation
Environmental Protection Agency
Food and Drug Administration
National Cancer Institute
National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences
National Institutes of Health, Office of the Director
National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health
National Library of Medicine
Occupational Safety and Health Administration